The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Making Friends

VISITING foreign big-wigs make a good show this spring as they whisk by in big open cars from their reception at New York's City Hall to a festive luncheon at the Waldorf. The first act in the little pageant is the clearing of Fourth Avenue; in a matter of minutes this wide and bustling artery between the city's financial and shopping districts is swept clean of every vehicle. Then a few motorized police couriers make sure that all is ready. Next, a chorus of sirens heralds an advancing motorcycle squadron of New York's finest, their red headlights flashing intermittently and their spike-topped banners stiff and straight. Finally, our lunch-hour crowd of office workers lethargically ogles the graciously-bowing Gonzalez Videla of Chile or the impassive, handsomely-turbaned Liaquat Ali Khan of Pakistan, who leaves the waving to his wife.

We like these little shows here on Fourth Avenue, but we are beginning to wonder whether we shall soon have to make way for Juan (now Major General) and Evita Peron as they speed their fanfared way uptown.

That would be rather startling. But the fact that this country and Argentina are getting together has come into the news rather abruptly, too. Perhaps a new cordiality toward Peron was set off six months ago when Mr. Griffis went to Buenos Aires as our ambassador. Or it may be Edward G. Miller, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs—whom the papers identify with the new help-Peron policy—who is largely responsible.

In any case Mr. Truman and the State Department declare their advocacy of granting a credit of $125,000,000 to Argentina to enable her to pay off old debts to such US business interests as packers, oil companies, public utilities, airlines and film companies—and buy some of our much-needed farm machinery.

The economic difficulties of the Peron regime are apparent enough. Two years ago it was on the verge of bankruptcy; it suspended payments abroad and defaulted on commercial debts. Peron has also abandoned a somewhat grandiose five-year industrialization plan and has gone back to farm production as the national economic backbone. Foreign payments have been resumed on a very gradual quota basis.

Peron is in a bad spot. He turns to us for the credits that would save his skin. He has seen to it that the Argentine press tone down its criticism of the United States. He himself now refers to this country in terms of "cordiality."

THE arguments for bailing out the Argentine dictator boil down to this: to be friends with Peron is the best way to get to be friends with the Argentine people; in the cold war, and if a shooting war should come, Peron would be useful as an ally. The reasoning is dubious.

It can be readily admitted that Peron's social measures and his demagoguery have won him a wide popular following. If a genuinely free election were held tomorrow, he would undoubtedly win—as Hitler, Tito and Franco have won with varying degrees of compulsion in their respective countries. But to assume from this that putting a prop under the Peron dictatorship is a sound basis for winning the lasting friendship of the Argentine people is palpably erroneous.

That Peron has the best all-round army in South America may well be true, also that his navy and merchant ships could be used locally for coast defense and convoy duty. Yet such aid in the eventuality of war must be weighed against the effect throughout Latin America, and elsewhere, of the realization that for all our democratic pretensions we in fact support dictatorships—even without special provocation. Is it at all certain that Peron's now-purported signing of the Rio mutual assistance pact in return for these credits will make for a genuinely united Latin America? Would not US support of Peron alienate more people in the other Americas than it would win—to weigh the matter merely in local and strategic terms?

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• NEXT WEEK •

The magazine's new series of dispatches from foreign lands continues with a report from Santiago, Chile, from Senator Eduardo Frei, a leader of the Christian Democrats.

"For North Americans capitalism represents a practical formula which has proved successful: as a nation they have reached the highest level of wealth and as individuals the highest standard of living. For South Americans the capitalistic system represents exactly the opposite."

In the crush of the cold war the other peoples of the world can understand the virtual strategic necessity of dealing with a Tito, or of preparing for the worst eventualities by coming to agreements with Franco. But Peron seems far indeed from the main theater of operations and his potential contribution to the Western power aggregate is comparatively small. By our new Argentine policy we seem to be going out of our way to disclaim our devotion to the cause of human freedom. Even on a pragmatic basis the step seems singularly ill-advised. There are plenty of undeveloped lands where the extension of such credits would strengthen democratic processes.

The Fifty Thousand

THINGS are comparatively clear and clean-cut now. It is enough today to prove that a man is a Communist. Once that simple fact is beyond question he stands condemned by the terms of his own creed. If he remains loyal to the Party, he is a man set apart. His ultimate allegiance is not to the United States but to an idea which has been incarnated in the Soviet Union. He not only fails to share the genuine concern for survival found among free men everywhere, he is an actual threat. Either remotely or immediately he is involved in a conspiracy, and however convinced, however honest or ignorant the man is, traitor is the word for him.

When a man has lived through the history (and the clear convicting evidence) of the past five years and still freely says he is a Communist —then you have the ultimate treason: the betrayal not only of his own country but of mankind. Such a one has set himself apart; he must expect to be as lonely and cut-off as Earl Browder sounds when he is interviewed on the radio by hostile questioners and heard by millions of hostile listeners. He must expect to be as far separated from ordinary men as those few in trench coats who marched bravely under red banners on May Day while New York cops stood by, sullenly dutiful, and the people along the curb hissed and cat-called.

In other countries the red parades were proud and triumphant this May Day: those along the curb in Prague or Budapest didn't dare to hiss. But here there is still a choice, and the American Communists of 1950 have made it.

It is not easy to be a Communist in the US

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today. It certainly means lonely isolation; it may mean persecution and suffering. And while it is always sad to see men cut away the ties binding them to the interests of humanity, it is really a terrible thing to see them willingly suffer for a false belief and summon all their spiritual resources of bravery and courage to serve an evil choice. That is goodness used to serve evil—of all perversions the most malicious. The Communist, whatever moves him to believe and act as he does, is a tragic human figure. He is a man to watch and fear, but one to be pitied, too.

Jacques Maritain said once that Communism was the ultimate Christian heresy—the final travesty of Christian brotherhood, the final warped and perverted presentation of the Christian creed. Even Communism is not all bad—total evil would be total nothingness—and behind the perversions, the twisting and torturing of truth in the Marxist doctrine, there has always remained the reality that gave it meaning: the notion of human brotherhood, the thirst for justice, concern for the dispossessed, the instinct to protest against social evil, the ever-strong impulse for revolution in a world that was neither just nor merciful nor based on brotherhood.

These were the appeals that Communism made in the 30's. The complete doctrine was always a distorted, evil thing, but what appealed to many of the youths who embraced it was noble, in some cases profoundly Christian. Communism promised to fill up the vacuum a lifeless Christianity had created. Those who turned to it were often looking for what they did not or could not find in the churches. It is paradoxical that, given the religious confusion and illiteracy of the age, a man might be led into even militant atheism by an impulse Christian in its source. But the personal histories of the last two decades have provided example after example.

J. Edgar Hoover said recently that there were in the US 50,000 known Communists. Each of the 50,000 is a human being and can be understood only in human terms. How did they get to be what they are? What thing happened to them or around them that neither religion nor the democracy they were born into, or were received into, was found satisfactory for their human needs? At some point each of them made the fateful choice. The choice was not made in a vacuum but in a specific place, at a specific time. At least in many cases the choice would not have been made if some person or persons or community of persons had not failed both religion and democracy, and frustrated the noble impulses that move the young.

Now the die is cast and for many the choice is psychologically irrevocable. Though the first impulse toward Communism may have been Christian in its origin, the impulse is dead. It is as the Russian philosopher Berdyaev said: the peculiar evil of Communism is that it destroys the very things to which it appeals—the goodness and brotherhood of man.

Mr. Smathers and Mr. Pepper

MR. SMATHERS said that he was no "classmate of Alger Hiss," and Mr. Pepper said that *he* had not been born in Atlantic City. Mr. Smathers said that he did not wear the "red tie of Harvard," and Mr. Pepper said that *he* was no tool of corporations. Ex-marine Smathers said that Pepper was a fellow-traveler, and Mr. Pepper insisted that he was more southern than Margaret Mitchell. Mr. Smathers made it clear that he was a white man's candidate, and Mr. Pepper told the people, 'see the federal highways I have brought to you.'

After fourteen years to the left and slightly to the south of the Democratic Party, Claude Pepper has found that even in politics, death (as *Time* has observed) comes to all men.

In this case, resurrection is not impossible, Pepper has a lot of political capital left. But just now the brow is definitely clammy.

Mr. Smathers had it figured pretty well. First he repudiated the CIO support he had enjoyed in 1936. Then he chose his issues: FEPC, Communism and "creeping socialism." His selections demonstrated an admirable sense of fitness, Florida being reasonably wealthy but non-industrial, a Southern state (its Yankee immigrants usually find racial attitudes as easy to acquire as a tan), backward in some inland areas, and as generally conservative as any agricultural state is expected to be.

Mr. Smathers made the most of these issues in a rather nasty way. Mr. Pepper, on the defensive all the way, replied in kind, hitting Smathers as a reactionary and tool of big money. Smathers, with his opposition to the Fair Deal, his anti-Communism (McCarthy-type), and covert racial appeal, won the primary with the biggest majority a Florida senatorial candidate has won in years.

Pepper was vulnerable. He had a deadly record of friendliness towards the Soviet Union

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during the immediate post-war months. He had open, strong labor support, but labor itself is not influential enough in Florida to counter the anti-labor feeling that can be aroused against it. Pepper was sympathetic towards Negroes and won almost solid support from them, but again their support (Florida is only 10% Negro) was not enough to balance off the effect of white supremacy propaganda.

A liberal candidate in the South is most vulnerable to a ruthless opponent on the very issues that make his candidacy worthwhile. Even a mild "separate but equal" stand on the racial question lays the Southern politician open to vicious undercover attack.

Some Southerners have held out against the attack. Pepper had little trouble during the last fourteen years, but he had weak opposition. Ellis Arnall was very successful, and the failures of his heirs are not of his making. Estes Kefauver won in Tennessee, even though he ran in a manor ruled by a seigneur called Crump. Kefauver and Arnall both demonstrate the advantage of running against a machine. Local issues are by far the most useful. The election news from Alabama speaks again about a well-fought local campaign, as voters threw out the Dixiecrat state committee and renominated Lister Hill.

The cry of the demagogue is shrill and deafening, but, blessing in disguise, nobody's nerves can stand it forever.

Polish Church-State Agreement

A CERTAIN mystification persists over the signing on April 14 of an agreement between representatives of the Polish hierarchy and the Warsaw government. However, a few things are known. Although the agreement was made during Cardinal Sapieha's absence in Rome, the three bishops signed the agreement on behalf of all the Polish bishops and archbishops. And whatever the government's reason for pushing the agreement at this time, it appears that the Church in Poland has agreed only to certain material concessions, notably the disbanding of *Caritas* (Catholic Charities). In return the Polish Government has, at least in theory, given explicit ideological recognition to papal jurisdiction in matters of faith, morals and discipline and to certain rights of Catholic parents, schools, seminaries, papers and religious associations. We are assured that the Polish hierarchy is united on this matter.

Taking a Flier in Movies

THE news that independent films are back again in favor along with oil fields and gold and uranium mines as long-shot speculations is hardly good. It means that our local movie theaters will be dealing increasingly in synthetics. For when a Florida dry goods man named John Stillman succeeded in backing two such solid box office successes as "Champion" and "Home of the Brave" in a single year, he whetted the appetites of other wealthy speculators. Independent films, moreover, account for one-fifth of the movies shown on our American screens today.

The way *Business Week* describes the conceiving and the making of such movies indicates what level of artistry may be expected. The object of the operation is plain. The lower production costs of independent, smaller-time production make that object attainable if the movie proves to be a hit. If it grosses a million and a half from showings in the United States and Canada, sales abroad and television rights, it will net a really tidy sum. No doubt the prospect of having a hand in the creation and distribution of this means of entertainment adds spice to the speculation.

The speculator's first job is to get hold of a promising story (cost $35,000) and a competent producer who agrees to take it on ($45,000 more). From then on, the steps go into higher expense brackets. To secure the services of a pair of movie stars is next in line, while a director and supporting cast must somehow be picked up on the way. Film studios are said to be readily at hand. The problems of financing the venture, of getting one of the big distributors to handle the film, and other business arrangements need not concern us here. Even the fact of an overall addition of 50 percent for distribution costs is not particularly germane. The nub of the matter is on the production side.

With all deference to the capacity of the producer, director and studio acquired, this is hardly a propitious beginning from an artistic standpoint. The run-of-the-mill process of the major Hollywood movie companies has nothing sacrosanct about it. Yet it is hard to see how the proliferation of get-rich-quick synthetic film projects can do anything but whittle away at the already shrunken stature of current American cinema. The baleful effect of such makeshifts on foreign moviegoers is an added element. When Verdi wrote *Aida* on order, it was at least a state occasion.

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The Sinner Who Looks Like a Saint

What are novelists trying to say—can a sinner be a saint?

By GERALD VANN

Le pécheur est au coeur même de la chrétienté. . . . The sinner stands at the very heart of Christendom. No one is more competent than he to say what it all means—no one unless it be the saint." These words of Péguy might form a text for a great many contemporary Catholic novels: you think not only of Greene, but of Waugh too, of Mauriac. And as you follow the unfolding drama of the lives created by them you sometimes find that in the end the sinner comes to look suspiciously like a saint. Are the novelists justified? Can the sinner be a saint?

We shall perhaps find an answer if, to begin with, we examine Péguy's words more closely. Why is the sinner the central figure? Why is he more competent than others to say what Christianity is about? Because Christianity is the religion of redemption, of rescue, of mercy, of the tenderness of God: because Christianity means the coming of light from darkness, of life from death: the dry bones live again. And it is the sorrowing sinner who knows this process, knows it in his heart, far more than the ninety-nine who need not penance: it is the sinner who knows the need of a Savior by more than hearsay: it is the sinner who knows the grace of God not as an empty term in a textbook or a sermon but as a reality longed for, fled from, gained and lost again, known as a blinded man knows light and color.

Clearly we are using the word sinner, when we speak thus, in a special sense. Mary, who was a sinner in the city, Peter, who denied, out of cowardice, the Christ he loved, all the millions of human beings who fail from weakness to keep the law of God: yes, you can call them sinners, but they are sinners in a very different sense from those who deliberately turn their love into hate, who coldly deride God and His law, who blandly ignore the reality they have once known. These others sin, but they struggle; they disobey God, but they love God or they long to love God; and so it is that in fact their love can become a deep and consuming fire in them, in a way that is unimaginable to the externally pious Christians to whom these buffetings are quite unknown and who perhaps are complacent about their success in keeping the law.

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SO WE begin to understand more clearly why Christ was the friend of sinners; we begin to see a deeper truth in Aquinas' dictum that the sins of the flesh are less grave than the sins of the mind, than pride and hatred and despair. Father Vincent McNabb once said: "When our Lord looks on a sinner he isn't a sinner: he used to be." But does that mean that his sinful habits fall from him like a garment, that he is suddenly and completely free? It may, for indeed there are plenty of examples of the sudden conversion which does bring about a sudden and complete change of character; but it may not, it may mean a different sort of change: a change from being a sinner in the deeper and more real sense of one who hates God to being a sinner in this other more technical and superficial sense of one who loves God but is not yet wholly free.

"The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. . . . The good which I will, I do not, but the evil which I will not, that I do." The more one studies human behavior the more one realizes the degree to which it is determined. We have free will, we can choose, we can make up our own minds, yes, but not always, and certainly quite often not completely: there are conditions of mind and body in which freedom is in fact impossible, as in obsessional states; but quite apart from that, there are all the situations in which freedom is not wholly destroyed but diminished, there are all the "enemies of the voluntary" of which we read in the moral theologians; and among these is the *habitus retractatus*—the habit which has been repented of but is not yet eradicated. The sin goes on; but it is sin *à contre-coeur*, it represents not the deepest but only a superficial direction of the will; and that means more than that the guilt involved is considerably diminished.

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We must not think too exclusively in terms of warring impulses: the hoped-for issue of the struggle is not just light in place of darkness but light out of darkness: the light will be the greater for the preceding darkness because it is in darkness that the light is engendered; the love will be the greater for the preceding betrayals, because, as with Peter, it is in the sorrow for the betrayals that the greatest love is born. Sorrow is creative.

The sinner then, in this sense of the word, is indeed at the heart of Christendom because it is in him preeminently that the Christian mystery is achieved, the divine alchemy is achieved; the sinner knows better than others what Christianity is about because to him sin and grace, mercy, forgiveness, are not words learned in a catechism but realities known in the immediacy of bitter experience; and the sinner, finally, may indeed come to look very like a saint because this process that is going on in him all the time, this constant struggling towards the light and constant recession into the darkness, is a process in which love, though he may not believe it, is always increasing and increasing until in the end it may lead him to martyrdom.

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ARE we then to sin in order that all this may come about in us? Obviously no; not only because in any case the end cannot justify the means; not only because in any case sin is a violence against the nature of God and of truth which no good result to ourselves could begin to justify; but because we should then not be sinners in this sense at all: we should be throwing ourselves into sin instead of struggling against it. And that very fact may correct us if we allow ourselves to think that perhaps then after all our sins do not matter much, or even to pride ourselves on them.

It can never be true to say, *Pecca fortiter*: Sin away as hard as you can and then you'll become a saint. If we do we are in fact moving in precisely the opposite direction: we are not hungering and thirsting after justice even while failing to achieve it; we are turning our backs on it. If we deliberately and coldly choose evil, or if we begin to take a lenient view of our sins and to tell ourselves that they do not matter, we are necessarily turning further and further away from God, not struggling towards Him. And that hardening of the mind to evil has a sequel very far removed from sanctity: for it can end logically only in a freezing of the will in evil which ultimately becomes immovable, and the soul is then in hell.

What we can and must say is that, provided the struggle is really going on, provided the longing for God is really increasing, then however many the failures continue to be, even though to seventy times seven times, still there is hope because the light and the life are at work beneath the surface and they will shine forth *in novissimo die,* there will be the music and the feasting for the prodigal's return in the end.

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IF ALL this is true it provides us in passing with an answer which is not always adverted to in dealing with the question: If all that is said of divine grace is true, how is it that Catholics are so often no better than their neighbors? There are two answers which are often given to the question: first, that it is easy to see the sins and miss the virtues, which is true; and secondly that grace is not magic and, no matter what its power to transfigure a personality, it will not do so and cannot do so unless it is used and used to the full: a purely external and formalist frequenting of the sacraments will never make us saints; and that also is true.

But there is this third thing: that we tend necessarily to judge by externals—for only God knows the secrets of men's hearts—and therefore to confuse the two senses of the word sinner: the whole of this deep creative process may completely escape us. Two people may act externally in the same way, be guilty externally of the same sin: but in one the process of petrifaction may be going forward, and in the other the power of love may be growing to such proportions that in the end it will turn all to gold.

It is unwise to try to judge men in terms of character alone—a mistake that has been made by more than one moral philosopher. Character is the sum of many habits; it is a part of that training of the will which in turn is part of the aim of education. But only a part. It is possible to have a good character, which means to act habitually in ways which are morally good, and yet at the same time to fail to be a complete human being, to fail in spiritual vitality, to lack something which is revealed by its very absence to be essential, a pearl of great price. The ethic of duty for duty's sake is dead and depressing for just this reason: you are taking right action out of the sphere of vital action because away from joy and pleasure and love.

The sort of morality which in fact is no more than a thin-lipped human respectability is but a degradation of the same sort of thing. And there are the same elements, there is the same poison, in any moral life which is no more than a self-conscious and self-reliant striving after the right for its own sake or for the sake of some reward,

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some complacency, some *réclame,* which it brings. A character may indeed, if you dig down deep enough, reveal itself to be no more than a façade built to impress either the world or its own maker. That is why it is of little avail to train the will to choose the right and resist the wrong unless at the same time you are training the whole personality to see and to love. The pursuit of the right can be as sterile as remorse; what is creative and life-giving is the vision and therefore the love of truth and goodness and beauty. Augustine said, not "Too late have I found the clue to right action," but "Too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty ever old and ever new."

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IN OTHER words, we shall never understand Christianity so long as we see it exclusively in terms not of poetry but of prose. There are indeed numberless lives which could be called prosaic in no pejorative sense: simple lives which follow an even course, free of struggles and crises and tensions, and which, always faithful, always devoted, end by achieving great sanctity though it is probably the sort of sanctity which remains unsung. These are already at an infinite distance from the pure character-builders: for it is God, and therefore love, they serve, and a life which looks externally very humdrum may in fact be very precious precisely because it is so simple in the philosophical sense also, so unsullied, so single-minded, so sterling, so pure.

But there are the poetic lives also; and perhaps they too are legion. There are the "wrestlers with Christ" we have been thinking of: the lives whose poetry is dramatic and perhaps epic. There are the men and women—and perhaps still more the children—whose poetry is lyrical: their whole lives a constant outpouring of love expressing itself in ways which seem sometimes to defy the categories of a reasoned philosophy, for indeed not reason but the Holy Spirit moves them and makes them so unpredictable to more earth-bound minds. *Organum pulsatum a Spiritu Sancto*: to be the perfect instrument for God's fingers, producing divine music; to be so completely one with God, so completely filled with His life, that you can say "I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me": that is the consummation of the Christian life, and it is there that character becomes wholly transfigured into holiness, the virtues wholly taken up into that higher life we call the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, the prose wholly transmuted into poetry.

Because this is the consummation, it is to this that all the different kinds of Christian life come in the end: not only the lyrical children of God, not only the wrestlers who come to Him through much agony of spirit and the morass of sin, but the ones also who at the first were so prosaic, the good and faithful servants who have been faithful in little things, they too enter, in the end, into the joy of their Lord.

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IT REMAINS true that it is the sinner who is at the very heart of Christendom: there is one further question we must consider. If it is true that the sinner, more than others, can know the true meaning of Christianity; and if on the other hand it is true that the Christian may not for that reason sin, what is he to do?

For most of us the question is very quickly answered. We tend to think of sinners in terms of people whose sins have had some dramatic quality about them, a notoriety perhaps, or a physical or mental disintegration: but why should we? The constant sins of the tongue, the petty vanities and cruelties, the narrow-mindedness and lack of vision, the vacillations of faith and hope, the small dishonesties, the sloth and self-centeredness of many a respectable life: these are sins enough in all conscience; these are material enough for any exploration of the depths if only we will not blind ourselves to their true character. What we need is not more sin but more sense of sin.

But there are, thank God, the others, the golden-hearted ones who are always very close to God's will: what of them? Perhaps we need say no more than that one of the Gifts is called Understanding: it enables the soul to penetrate the inner meaning of ultimate realities—and if of love, of redemption, then certainly of the sin which the love redeems. There is no love without sympathy; but sympathy means experiencing directly in oneself what another is suffering. You could not be a saint without a sense of sin; and indeed it is one of the most strikingly obvious things about the saints that their awareness of sin is such that they sorrow over a peccadillo imperceptible to us far more than we over our gravest betrayals. No question for them of a knowledge of the Savior by hearsay. That is why saints, unlike sinners, are never shocked.

Le pécheur est au coeur même de la chrétienté. It should give us new heart, not only for ourselves but for the world as a whole. For the world as a whole, whether it admits it or not, is the Christian world, is the world for which Christ died, the world in which the redemptive process is being worked out to its fulfilment, the world which remains in travail even until now, so that it is wrong for us to despair. However great the mass of evil in the world it is wrong to despair: only if all struggle against that mass of evil had ceased would it be right to despair: and we know that in fact the struggle will not cease.

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The Bernat Case

The Illinois Supreme Court rules unconstitutional the divorce-court counsel of clerymen

By DAVID C. BAYNE

THE citizens of Chicago and Cook County have become vividly aware in recent years of the social danger that lies in the increasing divorce rate and the consequent breakdown of the family. In 1867 one out of seventeen marriages ended in divorce, and in 1945 the national rate was one out of four. This was the situation which prompted the Chicago Bar Association to attempt a remedy, or at least an alleviation.

The serious planning and work of the Chicago Bar Association over the years brought into being the Domestic Relations Act, which was passed by the Illinois legislature and became effective in December of last year. As the Illinois Supreme Court said later, just before it declared the Act unconstitutional:

> The laudable objective of this act . . . is the correction, in part, of the social and economic evils attending the disrupting of basic family relationships by actions for divorce. . . .

With this excellent objective in mind the courts of Cook County went about implementing the provisions of the Domestic Relations Act.

In accord with the Act, a majority of the judges of the Cook County Circuit established a Divorce Division for the county, designed to forward ". . . the interest of the state in the domestic relations of the people, and . . . to aid the courts in the protection of that interest in actions for divorce."

This Divorce Division was given authority to aid in reconciliations, concern itself with alimony, child custody and support, and all efforts necessary to correct the "evils attending . . . divorce."

Part of the regular machinery of the Act was the controverted Section 12. The Court should:

> . . . ascertain the possibility of effecting a reconciliation of the parties, and, where deemed feasible, may invite the assistance of representatives of the religious denominations to which the parties belong.

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The procedure went into operation in Chicago in December of last year, with minister, priest and rabbi aiding the court in salvaging as many Chicago homes as possible.

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MAX BERNAT, a citizen of Chicago, felt that Section 12 of the Act violated constitutional guaranties and was a ". . . law respecting an establishment of religion." Bernat sued and petitioned that the procedures under the Domestic Relations Act be stopped. The Chicago Bar Association was allowed to intervene in support of the Act in the capacity of "friend of the court." On March 22 the Supreme Court of Illinois handed down its decision, declaring the Act unconstitutional.

One thing is very clear about the Bernat case and that is the basis of the Court's decision. In treating specifically of the invitation to the clergymen to act as counselors the Court said: "We are of the opinion that the situation presented in . . . *McCollum v. Board of Education* . . . is similar." After a short explanation of that case the Court explained its Bernat holding:

> In like manner and to a greater degree than in the McCollum case, by permitting a master in chancery to summon the minister, priest, rabbi . . . to a hearing for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation, the statute utilizes a tax-established and tax-supported instrumentality . . . *to aid religious groups to spread their faith.* (emphasis added)

In this the Illinois Supreme Court indicated that it felt that the slightest tincture of religion was enough to render illegal great benefits to home, family and state.

The Court also showed that to its mind divorce had become a matter of particular religious belief, rather than a social evil affecting the welfare of the whole community.

> It is a matter of common knowledge that divorce is more abhorrent and reprehensible to some religious faiths than to others. Indeed some religious groups do not recognize the validity of a divorce decree rendered by a civil court.

Apparently this was an obstacle to inviting those

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religious groups to attempt to avert such a divorce decree. At least so the Court thought, for it asked how:

> . . . representatives of those religious faiths can be expected to respond to an invitation to repair to and aid a civil court when their religion considers the proceedings a nullity.

It might be conjectured that the Chicago Bar Association felt such religious groups would be all the more anxious to spare the parties just such a divorce proceeding.

It should be understood that other sections of the Domestic Relations Act were held unconstitutional for other reasons. But again in the matter of Church and State the Court was clear:

> . . . the representatives of those religious faiths may be more effective in effecting reconciliations . . . but . . . the Divorce Division *might* find itself serving as a vehicle for spreading a particular faith. . . . (emphasis added)

Here even the possibility, the threat, of a religious influence was seen to be sufficient to outlaw the benefits.

Thus it can assuredly be said that, even if all the objections collateral to the question of inviting the aid of clergymen were eliminated, the essence of Section 12 would still be unconstitutional as a violation of the first amendment of the Constitution.

★

THE Bernat decision confuses "spreading the faith" with the performance of a public service. Nuns on the battlefield have salvaged lives without directly spreading the faith. Why not priests in the courtroom salvaging homes? The chaplain in a state prison serves the state well in rebuilding the lives of lost citizens. So, too, in rebuilding families. The reconciliation of a man and wife is not a peculiarly religious function merely because it is brought about by men dedicated to religion. Averting a divorce is not an act of spreading the faith.

The Bernat case mistakes a matter of the common good for religion. The health of the state depends upon flourishing families. Russia stopped its divorce-by-postcard in order to preserve the family. Surely not for religious motives. Rather, to advance the welfare of the state. Simply because priests, ministers or rabbis, rather than doctors and psychiatrists, work for the common good does not render that work religious. Broken homes leave children without parents. Juvenile delinquents and young criminals are the unhappy concern of the state, but is its concern then a matter of religion and worship?

Is every act and work done directly, principally and primarily in furtherance of the public welfare going to be prohibited by the courts because the secondary, collateral and indirect result happens also to be of some benefit, however slight, to some particular religion? Religion is so close to life that logic like this is going to lead us into some sad situations.

What will become of the Bernat case is not yet known. Whether it will be appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States is a matter for much thought by the Chicago Bar Association and its friends. But what is known and all too clearly is that thus far the Bernat case marks another step in the advance of secularism.

FROM FRANCE

Politics Is the Devil's Part

I WRITE these lines a few yards away from the ocean, having come for a few days to a small seashore resort in Brittany, not far from Quiberon. Behind me, a few miles back from the coast, are the celebrated rows of Dolmen stones which serve as a reminder of how long man has been on this earth and how tiny a space our modern, urban, technical civilization occupies in the infinite expanse of man's history. Before me the waves of the Atlantic gently break upon the strand. Over there on the other side of the bay little whitewashed sailors' cottages stand among the fir trees. There are no voices, no signs of life except for the fishermen who are going to spread their nets over the rocks at the water's edge.

Everything that I had been planning for these last few days to say to American readers about French life in these months suddenly seemed to me hollow, erroneous, inexact. To get from Paris to this abandoned corner of Brittany I had to pass through town after town which was still asleep in the early dawn of springtime. Little villages made up of houses several centuries old, where motive power is still provided by oxen under a yoke. Except for the radio, a few tractors, and a movie theater in an occasional town, nothing in the way of feeling, living, and working in these provinces has changed since the Middle Ages. Life ever flows on there, rude and tranquil, with the same rhythm it has had for five hundred years.

How is it possible to speak of that strange complexus which French life is, without first recognizing that? Paris isn't France. What we in Paris look upon as a major event—the collapse of a government, the signing

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of an alliance, the appearance of an important book—makes no palpable impression on the thinking of three-fourths of the population. Domestic cares, anxieties about work and community problems make up the essential framework of their existence. People read the papers "to find out what is going on, to keep in touch with things, to learn the bad news."

The government, whichever one it is, is always *"they,"* and the word is said in a tone of irony and condescension. That is because the process is always the same: "Lots of promises before coming to power. When they are in, they begin to help themselves, and it always ends up by an increase in taxes."

What few bursts there were of political confidence and hope were short lived. (Doumergue in 1934, Pétain in 1940, DeGaulle in 1944.) The great majority of the French people do not see themselves in their leaders, have no confidence in them, have no love for them.

★

PERHAPS we have here one of the really basic reasons for the sort of stagnation there is in France, for the country's inability to help herself, to bring into play her vital forces—that astonishing capacity inherent in her for righting things. For the majority of Frenchmen public life is the devil's part.

Obviously I should need more space than I have here exhaustively to analyze the causes of this civic distrust on the part of the French people. Essentially there are four reasons, as I see it: (1) The unsuitableness of their system of parliamentary democracy for the present situation. It is here that the criticism by DeGaulle comes closest to the feelings of the people. Everyone recognizes, unless he in some way benefits personally from the system, that our democracy, which was set up in imitation of the English system for times of peace, cannot govern France in its present divided state. Since 1944, governments have taken geometric forms in which hostile forces neutralized each other: no bold, forward-looking, constructive policy is possible when the existence of a government depends for a majority on a handful of votes, on intrigue in the corridors. However, when the question of how to replace the present system arises, everyone starts back in fright. There are, in fact, only two possible ways of supplanting the current system: Gaullism and Communism. The first incurs the risk of a dictatorship, the second would be dictatorship for certain. Frenchmen have a horror of dictatorship; they have no taste for political adventures. They remain content with what they have: "After all, what we have is better than what we might get."

(2) Recent political history. In a short decade our people have experienced the Third Republic, the Vichy regime, the taking of power by DeGaulle, his eviction and the present Fourth Republic. Each change has had as an accompaniment accusations of treason, imprisonments, even gunfire. Under the circumstances the French people believe it is hardly worthwhile to manifest great loyalty and confidence in a system which may come a cropper in a future more or less near at hand.

(3) Lack of man-power. Let us not forget that France is still suffering from her frightful casualties in World War I. This terrible wound still makes itself felt in the lack of men of from thirty to sixty years of age. The generation born after 1920 is not yet up to political responsibility.

(4) Finally and above all, it seems difficult for France, turn-table of Europe and of the world and susceptible to every influence, to make her choice, to explore the new paths to the future in the present state of terrible division in the world.

★

FOR the first time perhaps since Louis XIV the French people realize that they no longer have the means of making history. In an absolute sense the strategic, economic and demographic forces of France represent nothing in the actual power balance. Perhaps they retain great importance if added to others. But it is nonetheless true that the average man recognizes that he plays no decisive part in what is taking place in the world now. And that brings with it a sense of withdrawal, a dangerous feeling of fatalism. The Americans and the Russians will take charge of clearing up all that, people say.

(An interesting thing to look into would be whether this French torpor is not simply apparent and superficial and whether new forces are not now in the making which, except for an international catastrophe, promise to bring about that French revival which everyone expects 20 to 50 years from now. I myself am of this conviction and I hope to be able to show the readers of THE COMMONWEAL these forces at work in the Church and in the nation, that communitarian endeavor, that intellectual and spiritual ferment which astonishes many foreigners when they chance upon mentors who can point it out to them.)

★

THIS lengthy preamble is perhaps of some use in making clear the mood (I shall not say with Lily Doblhoff of *malaise,* but of quasi-indifference to public affairs) which is now so characteristic of France. Only this unhappy diffidence on the part of the French people can explain how the scandal of the Generals, which was so thoroughly exploited by the opposition parties of DeGaulle and the Communists, failed to throw the existing regime into greater confusion.

There is the same evidence of popular lassitude in the failure of recent strikes. Many foreigners, not to speak of Frenchmen, do not realize that the situation of the great majority of the workers in the industrial districts is lamentable indeed. Housing conditions are particularly bad, the building program being entirely inadequate; five

The author of "Politics is the Devil's Part" is Robert Barrat, who is an editor of Témoignage Chrétien and is associated with the Centre Catholique des Intellectuels Français. He will report regularly from France in this magazine's new series of dispatches from abroad.

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million dwelling units are needed. Besides, the cost of living has risen 20 percent since 1939, while the average wage is only 15 percent higher. Since September, 1948, wages have remained virtually stationary, while the cost of living has increased by one-fifth. Many workers' salaries range from 15,000 to 20,000 francs a month (roughly $43 to $57). Factories in the Paris area employ girls at 30 francs an hour. A man without a job gets unemployment benefits of but 4500 francs a month.

But for six years the trade unions and political parties have time and again urged workers to strike with little to show for it. The result is that for all his genuine wretchedness the factory worker hesitates to subject his family to the black and anguished atmosphere of a serious strike.

★

THAT is how, little by little, a strike movement has been built up which is so justified that the collective French hierarchy publicly spoke out for it. To be sure, the central trade union federations have sought demagogically to outbid each other and have led a demand for a general salary increase of 3,000 francs a month, which the French economy in its present state could not absorb. But the development of production for the past two years unquestionably permits more than the wretched two or three percent increase which management has grudgingly consented to here and there.

Again we are confronted with a kind of congenital inability on the part of the State to inaugurate an economic policy which would enable us to break out of the infernal cycle of raising wages and then skyrocketing prices, a policy which would permit an effective increase in the real purchasing power of the working masses.

Government instability, the necessity of making certain electoral alliances, the fear of unpopularity with the well-to-do, prevent the Bidault government from instituting a credit and tax policy which would permit the maintenance of full employment and an increase of the proportion of the national revenue for wage-earners.

The Communists, of course, haven't the slightest interest in seeing France get on her feet through the efforts of a bourgeois government. Therefore they systematically keep the great part of the working class they direct on the terrain of the most spectacular wage demands—a thing sure to appeal strongly to the people. The other principal labor unions formally protest but follow along.

All this would be funny if there were not at stake the health, life and death of tens of thousands of French families. The gates of hope for liberation from the proletarian condition, half opened in 1944, are now in the process of slowly closing again. What is to be feared is that despair, that bad counsellor, will once again thrust the French working class toward the Marxist lorelei. The Communists appear decided, if not to play all their trump cards, at least to go out of their way to embarrass the government in the weeks and months to come.

ROBERT BARRAT.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

The Chrysler Settlement

THE settlement of the Chrysler strike comes after a hundred days of strike. A strike which need never have taken place. The kind of people who make estimates that can be expressed in arithmetic are calling it a billion dollar strike. And they are pointing out, as they always do, the loss to the workers in wages, and the time required to make up the loss.

Given the importance which men must attach to money, this way of measuring things conveys some idea of the cost of a strike. But it is a meaningless calculation always. And it shows no understanding of what a union is and what it means. Men who strike can never calculate with precision the length of the strike they engage in. Money lost is an influencing factor and hunger can bring men to their knees.

But, this side of hunger, men go on, and do not count the cost so long as they are persuaded that what they regard as right is involved. To those who know them it is an observable thing that workers have a profound and abiding sense of justice. This seems to be a fact which statisticians never learn; nor those sections of American management which wish to deny simple and obvious justice or to break a union. That is why judgment made by managements in advance of a strike as to endurance, based solely on arithmetic, fails to imprison the facts. That is why statistics after the fact fail to bring explanation.

The simple fact in the Chrysler strike was that 89,000 workers, members of the auto union, believed that they were entitled to pensions which ought to be a primary obligation of management. They found it difficult to understand why they should have to strike over an issue so clear to them. Nor could they understand why what Ford gave Chrysler refused.

It is true, of course, that Chrysler was willing to be responsible for pensions to employees who had no pension arrangement in their contract. But the corporation insisted on an exercise in outmoded paternalism. What it wanted to do was to make the Chrysler workers take the corporation's word for it that pensions would be available when the time came. That is, the corporation refused to do what any sensible and sound system of pensions requires doing. The corporation refused to set aside a fund, a trust fund if you will, which is the only way in which workers can feel that what they consider to be a right is guaranteed. And this magisterial refusal was grounded on the proposition that the corporation's "good faith and credit" were guarantee enough. It was a lordly refusal couched in lordly language. The Auto Workers, unable to find a reservoir of such faith, rejected it.

About this "good faith and credit" offer, two things occur to me. All of us remember that when our Constitution was finished it came from Philadelphia lacking a Bill of Rights. When this fact was pointed out

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to its authors, they replied that it was understood, that it was to be taken for granted that such rights—freedom of religion, of speech, of the press, for example—were guaranteed. There was, they said, no need for writing them down.

But an honorably skeptical citizenry could not extend such faith, or proceed in the civic expectation that government could be so trusted. Time and history, surely, have proved them right. And if the auto workers have learned anything it is that it is better to have things in a contract.

The second thing is this: historians tell us that the move from mediaeval to modern history as respects the individual is a move from status to contract. That is the profound difference in the two kinds of society. Contract is a requisite of modern living: things must be written down. Faith is no longer a guarantee. There is no atmosphere which supports it. For support of our expectations and our rights we must rely on contract enforceable by law. The society of which industrial relations is a part is no different, in this respect, than the rest of our society.

One may put it, then, that what the Chrysler corporation stood for in this contest, which they were willing to submit to the ordeal by strike, was a point of view wholly alien to our normal habits and practices. All around them, in the rest of industrial society, pension funds were being set up—the kind of fund men call "actuarially sound." But they wanted to live on an island of mediaevalism. The things Chrysler insisted on having the auto workers do, they wanted in the contract. A corporation which did not have faith wanted a union to have faith in it.

That is the nub of this business. And it is that which made me say a strike should not have taken place. What Chrysler signed on the 4th of May it should have signed a hundred days ago.

But the company's mentality is vindictive. Chrysler's Herman L. Weckler said at the strike's end that:

> A strike is not a victory for anybody. As regards pensions and other benefits that the individual employee gets under the new contract, he could have got substantially these at the conference table without losing a single day's pay.

But unless the word "substantially" has special meaning for Mr. Weckler, surely this is not the case.

★

AND what are we to make of this? Many Chrysler workers signed up with the Blue Cross. The workers pay premiums which are checked off by the Chrysler corporation. During the strike the Blue Cross did not expect or want the corporation to pay these premiums. What it did ask from Chrysler was that the corporation guarantee that, when the strike was over, it would check off the back premiums accruing during the strike. In the steel strike all of the companies gave such assurances to the Blue Cross. Some of them even paid the premiums. But the Chrysler Corporation refused. As a result the loss of hospital insurance of the Chrysler auto workers was threatened. The UAW had to pay the premiums out of the union treasury. I think this little episode needs no comment from me. Except this: it was hardly such a demonstration as to evoke from the workers good faith in their management.

During the strike and even at its close Mr. Weckler maintained that the UAW prolonged the strike so that it could collect the maximum strike fund through assessments on all UAW workers. This is comment unworthy of notice, save that it indicates once more the peculiar lack of understanding of human motives Mr. Weckler has. Obviously strike funds must be collected if there is a strike. But it is better not to have one at all. And I cannot be persuaded that this strike was necessary or that the Chrysler corporation did not bring it on itself.

But given the strike and the acrimony which characterized the collective bargaining process, Mr. Reuther took occasion to reopen the whole contract—a thing he would not have done in more peaceful circumstances. As a result not only were pensions, company-paid hospital, surgical and life insurance coverage made part of the contract—wage differentials were wiped out in many instances, wage increases won in some cases, and vacation pay increased. Furthermore, what the union calls "strengthened grievance procedure" and "improved seniority provisions" were among the non-economic demands which were satisfied.

There can be no question that the auto workers have won a victory. And there can be no question that the cost of such victory was so great that it cannot be counted. Its financial cost was great—but its psychological cost cannot be calculated. Such wounds are deep wounds and they do not heal easily.

I have never been unaware of the fact that unions and management are at war. They have ideas and aims and purposes that are in dispute, and are greatly worth disputing about. But this war, I am persuaded, was a brutal one. It was war like nineteenth century war. It ought to be outmoded. Our corporations are too big, too important, to conduct their disputes with such rancor, with such incoherence and with so little dignity.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

The Screen

TO KISS OR NOT TO KISS

THAT is the question which worries many a studio when it is making a western and comes to the finale. Should the cowboy and cowgirl embrace in a clinch or should the lone ranger ride off into the sinking technicolored sun as the words "The End" appear? Actually the studios are divided on this burning question; if their interest is in the star and they intend to use such popular crooner-actors as Roy Rogers and Gene Autry again and again in westerns, they decide against the finale kiss

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which may suggest that their hero won't be available next month for a new romance.

If, however, their interest is in the story, and their stars are Gregory Peck and Robert Taylor, who don't necessarily specialize in westerns, there may be a kiss (if the script had led up to it) or we may see the hero riding off to new adventures or we may even see the hero die (if he's been a bad boy and Johnson Office justice insists on punishment). The fact that westerns are often designed for children has something to do with the decision about the finale kiss. Kids are likely to find the love stuff rather mushy, and their fast-riding, hard-fighting, straight-shooting hero should not mess up the real issue with romance. In recent years, the studios, especially those making big, expensive westerns, hope to attract both the minor and adult audiences to their high-budget westerns; so they compromise on the romantic angles.

Although I like westerns very much, I do wish the studios who make them could think up a new formula, a new plot or reason for the hero's riding so fast on such a handsome horse before such beautiful scenery. Several of the companies have tried in their new releases, and you may even find in this latest batch of oaters (as the fan magazines like to call them) some cinema fare that will win you into a theater.

★

COLT .45" tries to have its cake and eat it too. A foreword explains that a gun is like any other power for good or evil in that it's the man behind the gun that counts. Having got this off its conscience, the picture shows us reel after reel of Randolph Scott chasing Zachary Scott who stole two of his Colt pistols. Randolph, a gun salesman, feels greatly responsible for the crimes that Zachary is committing with his Colts. And let me tell you, brother, that the shooting and killing in this oater are vivid. Although the romance involving Ruth Roman is kept to a minimum, "Colt .45," with all its side lectures on the good to be done with guns, is nothing for the kiddies. Actually it hasn't much for adults either unless they get a kick out of watching Zachary's sadistic behavior.

One maker of westerns who really tries to do something different in his movies is John Ford, and his new thriller stands up well with the best in the field. *"Wagonmaster"* is concerned with a couple of young horse traders (Ben Johnson, Harry Carey, Jr.) who lead a party of Mormons from Crystal City in Utah to the unexplored region around San Juan River. Ford has used this cross-country-trek idea several times since he made the famous "Stagecoach," but because he uses it so well and changes the characters and situations a little each time, I'd even welcome it again. Joining this caravan with the Mormons (Ward Bond, Jane Darwell and others) and the two daring guides, are some show folk (Joanne Dru, etc.) and five sinister outlaws (Charles Kemper, etc.). You get the works: Indians, perilous mountains, the dry desert, and finally the vicious outlaws who turn

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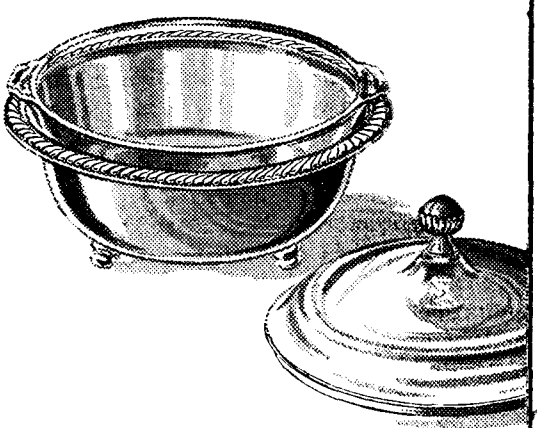

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on their own companions. But what makes Ford's film so wonderful, outside of his skilfully delineated characterizations and the stunning background scenery he always selects, is the remarkable feeling he gets of a group of people going somewhere. We actually accompany this band as it rolls along, stops for water or recreation, starts again, moving westward, southward. Although "Wagonmaster" has a small share of romance, younger audiences won't find that it gets in the way.

★

A *TICKET to Tomahawk"* successfully does something that I am surprised more comedies have not tried to do: satirize the whole western genre. The time is 1876. The locale is Colorado, mostly precipitous mountains. And the main characters are a drummer selling the *Saturday Evening Post* (Dan Dailey), a girl who can outride, outshoot and outspit any deputy this side of etc. (Anne Baxter), an engineer who is taking his train in its initial run from Epitaph to Tomahawk to win a franchise (Walter Brennan), and a handsome villain's accomplice whose purpose is to stop the trip with gun, arrow, boulder or any other way (Rory Calhoun). Richard Sale has directed the good script he wrote with Mary Loos, and the result is one of the funniest movies in a long time. The laughs derive not only from the many wisecracks (like the serious remark describing the attacking Indian chief as a very high type of clean-cut Aborigine) but also from the nicely portrayed characters and the amusing situations in which they find themselves. Western movies are kidded unmercifully, and while the plot has enough suspense to keep all audiences on edge, it will particularly delight admirers who would like to see their celluloid heroes and heroines and villains razzed. Anyone taking the picture seriously might be surprised to see it blossom out into a musical in one scene. The picture has little for youngsters but even they will admit the bussing episode is more funny than romantic.

I'm afraid *"The Sundowners"* will interest future moviegoers more as the first appearance of John Barrymore, Jr., than as an outstanding western. Its plot, with the usual western formula about cattle rustlers and bad and good brothers, is well handled by Robert Preston and Robert Sterling; but the piece is rather talky and its motivations aren't very sound. Young Barrymore will no doubt improve as an actor. At this stage he has little more to offer than a junior version of the great profile. The picture's scenery in Technicolor, however, is very handsome. And the rough stuff is indeed brutal.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Stage

The Season's Odds and an End

APRIL being the New Year in theatre parlance, it appears that some sort of Spring roundup is long overdue in this column and is herein inscribed at my usual random:

A Phoenix Too Frequent: Christopher Fry, England's sudden, current, prolific poet, drew rather ill-luck in his first Broadway showing. Evidently his young producers, the Messrs. Scheuer and Carson, had not the means to support him beyond a five-night's showing; and again, in pairing his piece with Kenneth White's sensational melodrama, "Freight," I am afraid the managers were guilty of every sort of editorial confusion. The element of contrast, which was obviously their touchstone, operated strangely enough against both authors. Throughout the evening, Mr. White's effort seemed to be making Mr. Fry's even more superficial, while Mr. Fry's in turn, served to increase Mr. White's hysteria. An ill-matched deal. Regarding the "Phoenix" piece I must admit to a good deal of interest and some delight. The author is unquestionably a theatre poet, he writes in lines which needn't be mouthed, he has a nice wit. Most important, he *can* characterize—his three persons in this early work are distinct and alive. The fable of the play is that classic anecdote concerning the Widow Ephesus who finds renewed life at her husband's tomb in the arms of a young warrior and is subsequently able to deliver the youth from death in a manner not surprising. What is tedious about the business will be that Mr. Fry's poetical gifts, intriguing as they are, are rather more cumulative than choice. More than one-half the play is comprised of verbal digressions: grand slabs of nouns and modifiers, a kind of conscious rodomontade motivating nothing. It is true that John O'Shaughnessy's direction did nothing to aid the actors nor to unify the piece, depending as it did upon a system of distracting gesture rather than any over-all style. Certainly at this point, I should say one will have to wait for John Gielgud's importation of the author's later, longer, "The Lady's Not For Burning" in order to learn whether he is a writer of words only from words, or perhaps from some degree of thought.

Tickets, Please!: The third of Grace and Paul Hartman's modest little revues to hit the street, this seems to me the best organized and the most engaging. It is still of nightclub size and one wonders how far into the balconies these small and casual antics can penetrate. However, if you're interested in good-natured foolery, plus a number of young discoveries, I think you'll find the evening worth it, particularly the stars' arrangement of a "Senate Investigation" and a very funny Cookery number which, on my night, delighted the house. (*at the Coronet*)

This Year At The Critics Circle: It is impossible to explain this clearly but amendments at the recent voting

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of awards at the Drama Critics Circle enabled two of the members (Louis Kronenberger and myself) to vote twice for "The Consul": first as the best play, and subsequently as the best musical, which latter ridiculous citation the production won. Mr. Kronenberger waged a heroic battle in the interests of supporting creative effort rather than a number of outworn categories, with the above shabby result. I might add that it costs each and every member of the organization at least ten dollars a year to maintain this level of steadfast apathy.

Note on a Further Prize: On May 25th, the American Academy of Arts and Letters is presenting its Medal for Good Speech on the Stage to Grace George, whose work in "The Velvet Glove" has been one of the distinctions of a various season. I rather imagine others among my colleagues must have agitated for this circumstance, just as publicly, privately, and insistently as I have done. In any case, it is surely excellent to see one theatre benefit being conferred with intelligence and accuracy, at long last.

★

FINAL Note: As this is my last column in these pages I would like to record my gratitude to my readers and particularly to the press people who, it seems to me, have for five years treated me with unlimited courtesy, even with interest. I should also like to underline that my decision to print elsewhere—whenever, wherever, and however I can—is not honestly dependent upon a sham Shavian rage at the commercial welter of Broadway, nor indeed upon earned exhaustion. The truth of the matter is that I have, sadly enough, no pretensions beyond drama criticism and as any thoughtful reader will attest, this kind of professional approach is no longer suited to the pages of this magazine. It is true THE COMMONWEAL has had a brave history in the field of letters in the past, and no doubt will have again. But in its interim (dilettante) periods, it is surely of no use to my kind of writer, nor indeed can I be of use to it. We part, I should say, wisely and well, and with a good deal of relief on my part.

KAPPO PHELAN.

Of Note

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA . . .

AN ENGLISHMAN

THE general subject of American Catholicism has recently won the attention of writers from several European countries. Professor D. W. Brogan of Cambridge University, who describes himself as "an agnostic brought up as a Catholic in Scotland," writes on "The Catholic Church in America" for the May issue of *Harper's* (49 East 33 Street. News York 16). Discussing the tone of recent religious controversies in the US, he says:

The functional, impersonal, official character of the parish priest is seen at a higher and more baffling level (for the Protestant) in the Catholic bishop. For the priest has to please the bishop, while the bishop, roughly speaking, has to please nobody. No doubt he has important, *i.e.* rich laymen to coax for funds; he has to obey, in final matters, the Pope; but by and large he is his own boss. This is so well known that there is (I am told) an English Catholic joke according to which his priestly friends tell a new-made bishop, "You'll never eat a bad meal or hear the truth again." The last is probably an exaggeration, but what is certain is that a bishop does not have to justify his authority often enough. No doubt (I am not privy to the secret discussions of any hierarchy) his brethren on the episcopal bench tell him home truths, but that is about all they can do. In his own diocese he isn't arguing, he is telling them, them being his priests. But he has, in practice, also to tell his laity, over whom he has far less control, and non-Catholics over whom he has none, directly at least. But the habits of uncontested command are not really suitable for public discussion— as is made only too obvious by many episcopal pronouncements from Cardinal Spellman downward. Of course, some of the lapses in episcopal tact and manners are due to the American habit of conducting delicate controversies at the top of one's voice. And the public manners of Bishop Oxnam and Monsignor Sheen suggest that among bishops the habit isn't confined to Catholics and that among Catholics it is not confined to bishops. If Cardinal Griffin and Monsignor Knox, Dr. Newton Flew and Dr. Donald Soper don't feel the need to shout, it is not their Catholicism or Methodism that explains their conversational tone, but their life in England, where even religious shouting is thought to be bad form.

AN ITALIAN

AMERICAN Catholicism" is the title of an article written for the Roman University Catholic Action magazine *Studium* by Antonio Mor, an Italian professor who taught for some time in the United States and is now at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He concludes his impressions of the Church in America:

> A very subtle propaganda working through the press, radio and movies has succeeded in convincing the American citizen that outside his country there is nothing but poverty and suffering, social injustice and obscurantism, old stones and ridiculously outdated customs. . . . So a lady from Brussels who had lately arrived in a city of the middle west was asked whether at her home in Belgium she had electric lights; and I myself during a visit to a factory was shown a microscope and asked if I had ever seen one before.
>
> This naive, childish nationalism is an aspect of

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the materialistic optimism peculiar to American life which breathes in the illuministic myth of an earthly paradise. . . .

The Christian Word—I mean the true Christianity of the Gospel, of the *Imitation of Christ,* of St. Francis of Assisi and all the saints; the Christianity of Pascal who said that Jesus will forever be in agony until the end of the world, and of Bloy to whom suffering seemed to be the only supernatural thing in the world—Christianity like this can flower in such ground only with much difficulty.

You might object that the nature of man is the same in every country. . . . But in our old Europe and also in the missionary churches of China, India and Africa, there is a tradition of poverty and of suffering, of resignation and of humility, of charity and of holiness. These still form the strength and power of the Church. In America there is no such tradition: there are no poor and no saints (at least not declared as such) and there exists rather the tradition of industry, honesty and pride in the prosperity thereby attained.

For example, it is indicative that Cardinal Spellman in his speech protesting the condemnation of Cardinal Mindszenty, realizing that the subject of how prosperity can be rapidly attained in America by everyone was the most suitable for impressing his audience, told how the parents of one who is still holding a great political position had immigrated seventy years earlier with only the clothes they were wearing and with great courage. "That is not one man's story," the Cardinal said, "it is the American story. Multiply it a million times or more for every race, creed and color and you will be able to sense the miracle of America." And the Cardinal finished, "This, my friends, is the America I beg Americans to save."

The exhortation to thank God for the mercies received, together with the exaltation of American prosperity, is found so often in sermons that one day, hearing for the thousandth time that Americans don't sufficiently appreciate the gifts given them by Providence, I could not keep from saying that I thought the opposite:Americans were far too conscious of the fact.

AN AUSTRIAN

IN THE April 22nd issue of *The Tablet* (128, Sloane Street, S.W.I, London) Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Austrian Catholic writer who recently concluded a lecture tour in this country, writes on "The American Catholics Revisited."

> At present the walls of the ancient [Catholic] Ghetto are breached and scaled, but such an operation does not go without pains and tears. The old clericalism *so far* is still surviving, and one wonders whether American Catholicism under a dictatorship bent on a total extermination of the clergy would continue to exist. Here is no preparation for the Catacombs, as one finds it on the European Continent. The Father-said-so attitude is still very much alive, and by no means only in Irish-American circles. (Even mothers would sometimes address their sons in Roman collars as "Father.") Catholic papers, periodicals and clubs are very much under the control of "moderators," and a big national Catholic weekly like the Canadian *Ensign,* operating without hierarchic supervision, would be unthinkable in the United States. Nor is the Curé d'Ars or the humble French abbé in the torn and soiled soutane the ideal of the American priesthood. These survivals, which hardly attract the non-Catholic, are also sometimes the target of young Catholic authors, who, in some cases, have gone to entirely unwarranted extremes; they have done this very much to the gloating satisfaction of people who are not only anti-clerical but also anti-Catholic. Thus there is a definite danger that, instead of a real sovereignty of mind which at all times characterized the genuine Catholic and distinguished him from the sectarian who becomes a prey of either Scylla or Charybdis, we will get a most unhealthy division into extremes.
>
> A host of petty periodicals of the *Ave Maria Chimes* type becomes opposed by a handful of authors trying desperately to "lean over backward" and to prove to the astonished world that the ideal Catholic is actually a man "like everybody else," save that he eats fish on Friday (and kneels before a Bishop to kiss his graciously extended ring). Yet, curiously enough, it is the "Ghetto Catholic" rather than the Assimilationist who reaps respect from those *extra muros.* Still, the real answer must come from those able to sail between the two dangerous rocks.
>
> On the other hand, it seems amazing how closely both groups agree on fundamentals beyond the level and ground of dogmatically fixed truths. Catholics may be Democrats or Republicans, "Fair Dealers" or defenders of an absolutely free enterprise, but they are all 100 per cent behind the Constitution and unconditional defenders of the democratic creed. Efforts have been made to prove that Jefferson copied his political notions from Saint Robert Bellarmine; thus the political uniformity of the New World engulfs even Catholicism, and as a result American Catholics cannot fulfil the role which they theoretically would have in the nature of things, i.e., to become the natural interpreters of the European Continental mentality and its political implications to their Protestant and agnostic fellow-Americans. . . . As a matter of fact, the vanishing Italian and Polish gangsters of Chicago are the last remaining representatives of a genuinely European type of Catholic in the American scene, and they are, needless to say, not the most attractive ones.

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Books

If You Were Born in Russia. Arthur Goodfriend. Farrar, Straus. $5.00.

THE purpose of this book, Arthur Goodfriend writes in his preface, is "to enable you to answer, on a basis of fact rather than emotion, such important and controversial questions as: Is Communism good or bad? Do the Russian people really believe in it? Can there really be such a thing as the New Soviet Man? If so, what kind of person is he? . . ." In the same preface, however, Mr. Goodfriend acknowledges that the pictures included in the book "are mostly from Soviet propaganda sources." We cannot help wondering at so candid a statement, especially since we have been fed with Soviet propaganda pictures for three decades. The many illustrations of *If You Were Born in Russia* remind us, with the blunt insistance and monotony of totalitarian publicity, of the numberless photo-murals, movies, stills and other pictures presented by all the Soviet-controlled agencies—from the USSR exhibits of the Paris and New York world fairs to the *Soviet Information Bulletin.*

Don't we then have to admit that a "basis of fact, rather than emotion," does not necessarily mean impartiality? This feeling is confirmed by Mr. Goodman's texts. True, his idea is ingenious: "to take you, an American, and set you down in Moscow with the plastic mind of a new-born babe. You start life in a Soviet maternity home and grow up within a Russian family and in Soviet nurseries and schools. . . . From birth to death, you see life, history, headlines, the future, through Soviet eyes." In conclusion, you are even buried in a Soviet cemetery, though it is not quite clear whether "the New Soviet Man" is entirely content to rest in the bosom of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, or whether (see chapter on religion) his soul thirsts for immortality.

If You Were Born in Russia is a compilation and digest of Soviet material, including moreover, as stated on the volume's last page, the testimony of non-Soviet sources: American newspaper-men, scholars, journalists and photographers (among them Robert Capa, whose admirably sensitive and spontaneous reactions to "facts" are somehow not reflected in Mr. Goodfriend's book).

In this list of non-Soviet sources, we are surprised to find the name of Nicholas Berdyaev, the Russian religious thinker who died in the spring of 1948. How this philosopher's writings offer material for a "reportage of Russia present and past," is a mystery. Berdyaev has not written a line of "reportage" throughout his entire career as philosopher and historian of Russian religious thought. Such a listing of source material leaves us with the impression that *If You Were Born in Russia* is what is known as a *"découpage,"* and thus can scarcely offer us the long sought for solutions of "controversial questions."

The Soviet "experiment" from cradle to grave cannot be understood and analyzed *per se* according to Mr.

Professor Arnold J. TOYNBEE

on

Christopher Dawson's latest book—

RELIGION AND THE RISE OF WESTERN CULTURE

"This latest work of a living Western historian and thinker, whose books I always read with eagerness and take to heart . . . it is a wonderful story, and **Christopher Dawson** has a masterly way of telling it."

That makes Father Philip Hughes and Professor Toynbee unanimous on **Christopher Dawson,** and if that isn't a recommendation, we should like to know what would be. The whole of Father Hughes' review of the book is in the May **Trumpet,** Professor Toynbee's (from a radio talk, just given over the British radio) we hope to put in the next issue. If you don't get the **Trumpet,** a line to **Lucy MacGill** will bring it to you, free and postpaid. If you are tired of hearing this we are sorry, but every time we say it, more people write in, so how can we stop?

Let us say again that this book, **RELIGION AND THE RISE OF WESTERN CULTURE** ($3.50) is the author's second series of Gifford Lectures, and that the first, published last year, was **RELIGION AND CULTURE** ($3.50). Neither of these books should be confused with other books by Mr. Dawson with the words "religion" and "culture" in their titles. He always puts those words in the titles of his books and won't let us change them, so we—and you—just have to put up with it.

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Goodfriend's *découpage,* because it is not presented with its true background: collectivization, the code of communist morals and social doctrines, the school, the hospital, the factory, the collective farm, the army, the press, the stage, the screen, the Church itself. . . . all these which have been shaped under the rule of a police state. This is something *more* than a planned economy, it is an economy, and an ideology, enforced through violence.

The collection is incomplete, because there are no pictures of labor-camps, no account of the vigilant and untiring activities of the NKVD, no acknowledgment of what the "New Soviet Man" has to suffer. He is deprived of even the simplest joys of freedom. Thus, as Mr. Goodfriend shows, the delightful talent of Samuel Marshak, whose poems and limericks have become almost classics of Soviet juvenile literature, is now forced into a campaign of ridiculing America. Millions of Soviet children (like the small, pathetic figure shown on the jacket of *If You Were Born in Russia*) will read about the wicked and absurd American millionaire Mr. Twister, his spoiled wife and daughter Suzie. This story has been told by Marshak with his usual humor, zest and sparkling rhyme.

A previous generation of Soviet children knew by heart Marshak's poem about the centipede, who required so many pairs of rubbers for his children. Today, Soviet boys and girls are denied such innocent pleasures. This is, no doubt, the most significant page of *If You Were Born in Russia;* it is as if Alice had surrendered her wonderland to the Queen and had shouted: "Off with their heads."

HELENE ISWOLSKY.

Shakespeare of London. Marchette Chute. Dutton. $4.00.

THIS is one of a number of popular lives of Shakespeare written for the general reader; of its kind one of the best. Miss Chute has read widely, her judgments are sound, her knowledge accurate, and her style even. She avoids "brilliant" writing and poster effects, and her narrative is rather in a sepia monotone. Indeed in a laudable desire to avoid sensation she has omitted —or overlooked—some passages in Elizabethan theatrical history which were full of color, such as the tales of the bitter rivalry between Shakespeare's Company and the Admiral's Men. Miss Chute rightly stresses the fact that Shakespeare was above all things a man of the theatre and that he owed most to his fellows in that unique fraternity, the Chamberlain's (afterwards the King's) Men. *Shakespeare of London* can thus be recommended as a good book for the public for which it was written.

Students will not find it so useful. It is not mere pedantry in scholars which demands that the author of a book about the past shall acknowledge the sources of her facts. From time to time Miss Chute makes interesting statements which the curious and interested reader will wish to pursue; but without the source he is left wondering where the author found the fact or whether she invented it.

There is also a matter of literary ethics involved. In 1931, for instance, Dr. Leslie Hotson published his discovery of a new and interesting fact about Shakespeare which he had unearthed from the Public Record Office in London. A modern author who uses that fact should at least acknowledge the debt to Dr. Hotson; it is not enough merely to include his book, *Shakespeare vs. Shallod,* amongst the other works listed in the ten pages of select bibliography. There is, admittedly, such a prejudice against footnotes in popular books that the author has always to face the problem of whether to take the cash of popular sale or to let the credits go. I believe that Miss Chute has made the wrong choice, for with proper documentation this would have been a most useful book for all students of Shakespeare.

G. B. HARRISON.

Wintertime. Jan Valtin. Rinehart. $3.50.

THE author became world-known through the alleged autobiography, *Out of the Night,* which sold a million copies in a dozen languages. It was one of the first of the sensational reports about totalitarian underground activities which frightened the quite unsuspicious Western World. Since this success Valtin has published several novels dealing with political problems of our day.

This new novel also has a political background: the corruption of Germany after total defeat, the blind desperation of hopeless men. In the explanation of this demoralization the author shows a great understanding: "If a man sleeps until noon each day for three days and does not eat breakfast, he can sell the bread saved in this manner for 30 marks; and 30 marks, a week's wage for honest labor, more than covers the cost of a week's legitimate ration of food. Why work if a man can steal a bicycle and can sell it an hour later for 4,000 marks, which is more than he can earn by a full year of constructive effort?" This is the atmosphere in which the characters of the story move.

There is also a certain insight into the corruption brought to this poor and disillusioned country by the activities of Russian agents. We hear about their espionage in the American Zone and of the hesitancy of the American authorities to face the unwelcome facts.

All this could be the historical milieu for a great novel. But it is not the author's aim to deepen the characters, to make them more extraordinary and profound than the atmosphere which he depicts with so much knowledge and skill. The problem of morality in such a world of corruption and fraud is not seriously developed. Characterization falls as flat as in the average mystery story, and the possibility of blending the atmosphere with the desire of man for moral integrity and a decent life is spoiled by the coarse stage effects of the thriller. Readers interested in the psychological background of the book will be disgusted by the claptrap, while the insight into the disintegration of a nation will be wasted upon readers who enjoy such unsophisticated melodrama.

MAX FISCHER.

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Rome: Portrait of the Eternal City. Edited by Herbert Bittner and Ernest Nash. Regnery. $6.50.

THIS collection of photographs, with an introduction by Professor Prezzolini, an Imprimatur and a Nihil Obstat, will be certain to interest most Catholics, and especially those who are going on pilgrimage. There are some one hundred and seventy illustrations and with few reservations, such as the omission of the questionably grandiose but important monument of Victor Emmanuel II, the selection is a good one. Regrettably the same cannot be said of the photographs themselves. Many are taken in too strong a light, there is often a bad want of depth and perspective, and contrasts of black and white are at times quite crude.

The introduction, in which there is an evident want of harmony between the professor and the journalist, is at times bookish, at times urbane. Anecdotes and generalities are numerous, and Professor Prezzolini says much about the values Rome has bequeathed to us and the meaning of the city's exquisite historical chaos. It is all said in a very pleasant and at times quite banal tone.

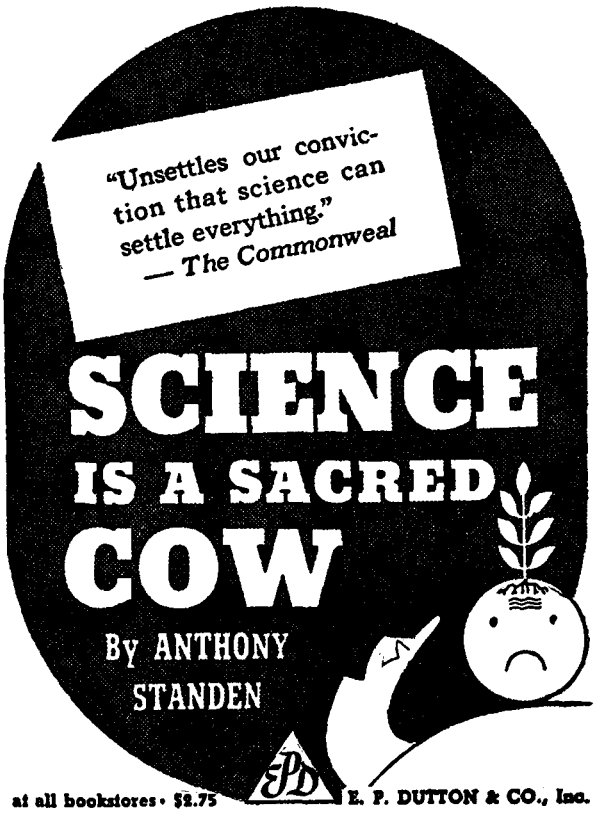
SERGE HUGHES.

Eloquent Indian. John Bernard McGloin, S.J., Stanford University Press. $5.00.

THIS is the story of Watomika ("Swift-footed One"), a Delaware Indian who became Father James Chrysostom Bouchard, Jesuit priest, eloquent preacher, and indefatigable missionary to the white population of the pioneer Far West in the later 19th century.

He was born in 1823 in the village of Muskagola near the modern city of Leavenworth, Kansas. His father was Kistalwa, chief of the Delaware nation. At the age of ten he saw his father, whom he had accompanied on a foray against hostile Sioux, fall mortally wounded in battle. If history were shaped by probabilities he would have followed in his father's footsteps and died an Indian chief. Instead he found his way to a Presbyterian school in Ohio, studied for the Presbyterian ministry, became a convert to the Catholic faith, entered the Jesuit Order in St. Louis, became the first American Indian ordained to the priesthood in the United States of America, went, in 1861, after an early priestly apostolate in the Middle West, to California where he became the leading pulpit orator of his day.

From 1861 until his death in 1889 he was a familiar figure in cities, mining camps and rural churches from Vancouver in the north to San Diego in the south, in Nevada as well as California. Bishops in eastern California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Victoria vied for his services and held him in high esteem. The one exception was Archbishop Alemany of San Francisco who was always ready to believe the worst of him, always threatening him with suspension. But when he died in 1889, Archbishop Patrick William Riordan, Alemany's successor, said of him: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"To no man in all the West is the Church of God more beholden than to **Father James Bouchard of** the Society of Jesus. He kept the faith in the mining districts; he sustained the dignity of God's Holy Church in the midst of ignorance and misunderstanding, and everywhere championed her rights. My debt to him, and I speak for by brother Bishops, is incalculable."

This is a first-rate work of historical scholarship. By dint of laborious research in the dusty files of long dead and almost forgotten newspapers, in parish records of old Churches from San Francisco to Eureka, from Susanville to Sonora, in the buried memories of the ghost towns of a once fabulous era, Father McGloin has rescued from undeserved oblivion one who well deserves to be remembered.

The reader is indebted to Father McGloin not only for the diligence of his research, but also for the quiet good humor and geniality of his style.

GEORGE H. DUNNE.

Grant of Kingdom. Harvey Fergusson. Morrow. $3.00.

THE theme of this historical novel is the way the people who inhabited a certain area beyond the mountains in the American Southwest deteriorated with the years. Retrogression takes place, however, largely on the plane of personal initiative and bravery. Mr. Fergusson's protagonists are a lawless lot; for most of them power and possession are the only objectives. In fact, despite a clearly plotted theme, *Grant of Kingdom's* easily-flowing narrative reflects little interest either in character or in people as such. E.S.S.

• REVIEWERS •

HELENE ISWOLSKY, a native of Russia, was an associate of Nicholas Berdyaev during the ten years preceding the second World War. She is author of *Soviet Man Now* and *Soul of Russia,* and is the editor of *The Third Hour.*

G. B. HARRISON, the distinguished Shakespearean scholar, is author of *Elizabethian Plays and Players,* and *A Jacobean Journal.*

MAX FISCHER was formerly literary editor of *Hochland,* Munich. He has published studies of Kleist and Strindberg.

SERGE HUGHES teaches at St. John's College in Brooklyn.

REV. GEORGE H. DUNNE, S.J. wrote the play "Trial by Fire," and *Religion and American Democracy,* a reply to the Blanshard charges. He is now stationed in Tucson.

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